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defects in Dr. Ritter's book, because I write not as a foe, but as a friend. Without by any means agreeing with all that Holdheim said, or with all that the Berlin *Reformgemeinde* has done, it is with the movement in which he took so leading a part that I feel the deepest and closest spiritual kinship. And though Dr. Ritter's little book needs here and there correction and amplification, it does present us with the outlines of a simple, pure and Jewish religion. Reformed Judaism is not without its difficulties ; but at all events it builds up its creed upon a less sandy foundation than the authenticity and verbal accuracy of a particular book. The results of Pentateuchal criticism cannot affect it. However difficult, therefore, it may be to fully establish our own position, our orthodox friends and brothers are in that respect, to our thinking, far worse off than ourselves. We do not despair of Judaism, however great may be the modifications that in the inexorable future may lie before it. Not without God's will have been its travailings in our own century. הָאֲנִי אֲשַׁבֵּר וְלֹא אֲוִלִּיד יֵאמָר יי ?

II.

PROFESSOR CHEYNE AND THE JEWS.

Professor Cheyne's most useful little book on Jeremiah is worthy of detailed criticism from more than one point of view and for divers reasons. Here, however, I only desire to discuss a single page of it, that namely which deals with the "perennial" and the "greatest" tragedy in Israel's history (p. 100). That tragedy consist in Israel's "ignorant unbelief," in its neglect of "its highest honour and grandest privilege ;" in other words, in its rejection of Jesus, the Messiah. Professor Cheyne invites the reader to consider the few words upon this large subject in his "Jeremiah" in connection with his article "The Jews and the Gospel," in the *Expositor* for 1885, p. 401-418. (The article is a reproduction of a university sermon on the Jewish Interpretation of Prophecy, preached at St. Mary's, Oxford, on March 15th, 1885). In this essay "the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, *either with or without orthodoxy*," (the italics are mine) is declared to be "the only complete remedy for Israel's troubles." Moreover (and here is the point which specially interests the present writer) Reform Judaism is urged to at least complete "its meagre, because predominantly negative" character, by "the recognition of the central importance of the person of Jesus and of the New Testament."

In spite of certain somewhat dubious words in his Jeremiah, I do not for a moment believe that Professor Cheyne is in any kind of sympathy with the miserable and immoral conversionary

efforts of the Christian proselytising societies. To combine the attractiveness of Christianity with the attractiveness of bread and butter, to catch the young and the unwary by all kinds of tempting ambiguities, to match a trained disputant against the guilelessness of a simple faith, all this is so ignoble, so repulsive to our moral sense, so unworthy of a Christian, a scholar and a gentleman, that I am sure that Professor Cheyne is, at bottom, its unmixed antagonist. Professor Cheyne appeals with rational arguments to educated persons, who can both appreciate and discuss them. This is the only form of proselytism which it is fitting for the adherents of one phase of Theism to employ towards the adherents of another.

"With or without orthodoxy" Jews in general, and Reform Jews in particular, are to accept Jesus as the Messiah. Professor Cheyne does not seem to imagine that the possible alternative creates a difficulty. But in truth it does. To begin with, not one Christianity, but many Christianities lie open to our choice. Omitting the minor divisions, are we to become Catholics, Protestants, or Unitarians? Each of these three forms regards itself as the only pure exponent of the Christian religion. Professor Cheyne even suggests a fourth form to our notice, a revival of the old Jewish-Christianity of the first century. Standing as we Jews do outside all these competing phases of the Christian religion, we can see the objections to an adoption of any one of them. Hence we are offered to accept Christianity "*without orthodoxy*." But it is one thing to remain a Christian, though an unorthodox one, and a totally different thing to leave another faith and *become* an unorthodox Christian. Broad Church Christians of different shades are now engaged in endeavouring with varying degrees of success to fashion their own Christianity; are we Jews to join them in their efforts? Surely the invitation is premature. I can perfectly understand how unorthodox Christians, who have been Christians all their lives, can impose new meanings into the old creeds and symbols; but such symbols obviously cannot be offered in any seriousness to those who stand outside as a perfect and satisfying expression of spiritual needs. Incarnation, Resurrection, and Atonement—these dogmas we need only, it is to be presumed, accept in an unorthodox sense. But what power and attractiveness can they have in such a sense to new comers?

Now, if Professor Cheyne means that his proffered unorthodoxy only relates to details, and that we are to accept the dogmas relating to the nature and life of Christ in the form in which an ordinary believer of the Church of England understands them, then, speaking as a Reform Jew, my difficulties are no less grave. For what has been one chief reason why orthodox Jews have become reform Jews? It is precisely the same reason which has induced or compelled orthodox Christians to become unorthodox. We Reform Jews

cannot accept any form of religion which is obliged to take its stand upon miracles (using miracles in the ordinary sense of the word). We cannot accept any form of religion which declares that it is possible for the revelation of God to man to be perfect and complete, or expressed at once for good and all within the pages of a single book. We believe in progressive, not in final revelation. To increase our present Bible by another three hundred pages makes no difference. You may be able to prove (I for one think you can) that this or that particular religious doctrine is more fully taught in the New Testament than in the Old, but you will not thereby make us believe that the limitations and imperfections, which it is the fashion of Christian critics to admit, and even emphasise, in the Old Testament, are wanting in the New. In the sense in which German philosophers use it, Christianity is no more *die absolute Religion* than Judaism: there is no *absolute Religion*.

Without miracle there is no form of Christianity which we Jews can join except Unitarianism. Would Professor Cheyne be satisfied with that? But, even if he were, Jews cannot join the Unitarian body. In the present days of criticism and comparison, Unitarianism, which assumes the *one* Saviour Jesus and the uniqueness and perfection of the New Testament, is quite unacceptable to those who have always been entirely outside any Christian community. I am keenly alive to the justness of Professor Cheyne's strictures upon Reform Judaism. At present it is somewhat a "meagre and predominantly negative" religion. I admit, again, that any unprejudiced theist who had never heard of either Judaism or Christianity would set the moral *impression* and the religious greatness of the Gospels far above those of the Pirke Aboth, that excellent but inadequate collection of sayings with which old-fashioned Jewish scholars are always, but vainly attempting to demolish the originality of Christ.¹ But readily as I admit that Luke xxiii. 34 breathes a supreme nobility of mind as compared with Jeremiah xvii. 18, the same limitations which we can detect in Isaiah or Jeremiah are also visible in Jesus. Such passages, *e.g.*, as Matthew iv. 22, x. 15, xii. 27, xix. 9, 24, xxiii. 33 are, for different reasons, incompatible with even our present ideas of perfect wisdom and perfect religion. There is, moreover, no such radical difference between the Old

¹ Admitting this, I deny that "the moral standards of the Jewish community need some rectification." The morality of an ordinary orthodox Jewish pulpit is quite as high and pure as the morality of an ordinary orthodox Christian pulpit. It is possibly even higher, for the doctrine of justification by faith is far more liable to moral perversion than that of justification by works. No Jewish pulpit speaks of the eternal punishment of unbelievers. It is a baseless accusation to say that "Philanthropy, in the widest sense, is a tender plant of Judaism; isolation, and the pride of race and religion, have hindered its development." No evidence is brought forward in support of this cruel allegation.

Testament and the New Testament, between the teachings of all the prophets and wise men, on the one hand, and that of Jesus, on the other, as would justify or explain our adoption of a new religion. German theologians of the school of Graf are wont to emphasise the differences between the Old Testament and the New. They freely use a language of mocking irreverence towards the anthropomorphisms and cruder religious expressions of the older portion of their Bible. In Wellhausen, who is greatly responsible for this ugly fashion, brilliancy, and even genius, cover the gravity of this descent from the language of Ewald. But, in the hands of ordinary clever and industrious German professors, like Stade or Jüllicher, this laborious humour is quite unendurable, and the anti-semitic prejudice which is presumably at the bottom of it all is only too easily and clumsily revealed. Are there no anthropomorphisms and superstitions in the New Testament? What are we to make, *e.g.*, of Matthew iii. 16, iv. 5, viii. 31, xvii. 5? If ever Reform Jews come to admit that among the many men of the Jewish race, upon whom, for the purposes of religion, God's spirit has rested, Jesus of Nazareth was one, if they admit that he more clearly expressed certain doctrines hitherto insufficiently revealed, and that he even added some new doctrines till then unknown, if they ever allow that his life and his death constitute a superb example of purity, devotion, and self-sacrifice to humanity at large, they will not thereby any the more have accepted Jesus as their sole and special Saviour, nor have admitted anything which should compel them to change the time-honoured title of their religion for another and less inclusive name.

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